

9-24-1854

Letter to John Butler and James Butler from Peter Butler

Peter Butler

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Polk County Oregon Territory September 21st 1834

Dear Children

I sat myself this morning to inform you that the drafts have come to hand, and we have got the money, and I considered it my duty to inform you of the fact by the return mail as I expected you would feel some uneasiness after receiving my last letter, I have paid for the claim by borrowing two hundred dollars of Isaac Smith which I expect to be able to return about Christmas. I sold my horse for one hundred and seventy five dollars to be paid at Christmas, I expect to sell my little mule that I bought of D. Halcy for one hundred dollars which will pay all that I owe, but I shall have no means to help myself with so I must live poor for some time to come. I have agreed to take Isaac's land in Illinois for the money that I paid for his claim, Thomas Hutchinson has concluded that he won't sell his part of the land, and Isaac thought that his part would not sell by its self, and he had no other way to make the money for me, and wanted me to take the land and concluded to do so, and if we should any of us conclude to go back to Illinois, we will have the land to go to, I suppose Hutchinson & Isaac will sell the undivided land which they own in Illinois if they can find a purchaser

(read the third page second) and the men will
not ~~quit~~ this fall and by next spring the Indians will
get into the mountains and so the matter will like-
ly end, I believe I told you James in my letter to you
that Eliza Ground and Bob both had the chill and
fever, they are both about well now or was when
I heard from them last, I have had two chills, but
I have got about well, so this leaves us all in
usual health, I write this letter to you both together
with ^{your wives and} all your dear little children
John I think that some person caught my three
cornered harrow, I believe it was one of the Criders
and it was not put into the note I wish you would
try to find out how it is, and if you can
get any thing you may have it for the trouble
you take in getting it, I want you to have pay
for all your trouble and you must retain enough
in your hands to compensate you well, I have not
time to write as much as I wish to write this morn-
ing, for we want to go to meeting some six miles
off and must quit writing and start or we will
be too late Your mother says that you may tell
Hannah Whitman that her cough is no better than
when she left Illinois, though her health is about
the same, indeed if the health of Oregon is better
than Illinois it is only case of the cholera or
some malignant disease, I close by subscribing
myself your loving father Peter Prutton

I would be glad to sell my tax title land across by
squint Ridge, if you can get an offer for the land
I am to have of Isaac let me know what you
can get for it and by that time we will conclude
what we will do, for some things this is a very
good country, by I should be better satisfied in Illinois
for this reason I have a living in Illinois, and have
to make a living here, and an other thing your
mother is not as well satisfied as she expected
to be, I will inform you of a most dreadful murder
or rather massacre committed on Snake river near
fort Boise some few weeks ago, a Mr Ward
(whose brother lives near us) was coming to this
country together with some other emigrants they
encamped one night and the next morning a
dispute took place between an Indian and
a packer about a horse each claiming the
horse, the packer pulled out his revolver to scare
the Indian, who drew his pistol and shot the
packer dead, the massacre then commenced &
the Indians killed ten white men, and took
the women and children and shortly afterwards
sawt the children a line in the presents of
their mothers, and after treating the women
in the most brutal manner, tortured them
to death in a manner too horrible to relate
a number volunteered and Isaac amongst the
rest to start to morrow after the Indians, but
the acting governor countermanded the order

Butler Family Letters

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Title: Letter to children from Peter Butler (Polk County Oregon Territory)

Date: September 24, 1854

Transcription:

Polk County Oregon Teretory September 24th 1854

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I would be glad to sell my tax title land down by Squire Rises, if you can get an offer for the land I am to have of Isaac let me know what you can get for it and by that time we will conclude what we will do, for some things this is a very good country, by I should be better sattisfied in Illinois for this reason I have a living Illinois, and have to make a living here, and an other thing your mother is not as well sattisfied as she expected to be. I will inform you of a most dreadful murder or rather masicrce committed on Snake river near fort Boisey some few weeks ago a Mr. Ward (whose brother lives near us) was comeing to this country together with some other emagrants they encamped one night and the next morning a dispute took place between an Indian and a packer about a horse each claiming the horse. The packer pulled out his revolver to sear the Indian, who drew his pistol and shot the packer dead. the masicree then commenced and the Indians killed ten white men, and took the women and children and shortly afterward burnt the

children a live in the presents of their mothers, and after treating the women in the most brutal manner, tortured them to death in a manner too horrible to relate a number volunteered and Isaac [amounht] the rest to start tomorrow after them Indians, but the acting governor countermanded the order and the men will not go [?] this fall and by next spring the Indians will get into the mountains and so the matter will likely end. I believe I told you James in my letter to you that Eliza Ground and Bob both had the chill and fever, they are both about well now or was when I heard from them last. I have had two chills, but I have got about well, so this leaves us all in usual health. I write this letter to you both together with your wives an all your dear little children

John I think that some person bought my three cornered harrow. I believe it was one of the Criders and it was not put into the note I wish you would try to find out how it is, and if you can get anything you may have it for the trouble you take in getting it. I want you to have pay for all your trouble and you must retain enough in your hands to compensate you well. I have not time to write as much as I wish to write this morning, for we want to go to meeting some six miles off and must quit writing and start or we will be too late Your mother says that you may tell Hannah Whitman that her cough is no better than when she left Illinois, though her health is about the same, indeed if the health of Oregon is better than Illinois it is only case of the cholery or some malignant disease. I close by subscribing myself Your loving father

Peter Butler